FORTY AHADITH

Compiled by
Hazrat Shah Waliyullah Dehlawi

Rendered into English by
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Shah Waliullah Academy
Phulat, Muzaffarnagar(UP), INDIA

FORTY AHADITH

(Sayings of Prophet Muhammad)
(blessings and peace be on him)

Compiled by
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Urdu translation and explanatory notes by
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INTRODUCTION

Rewards promised in Ahadith on committing to memory forty sayings of Prophet Muhammad (on whom be Allah's peace and blessings), narrating them to others, and publicizing them among the Muslims are so great that *Muhadditheen* (scholars specialized in the study of Ahadith), nay Muslim scholars in general, have at all times shown keen desire to individually compile a collection of forty ahadith to qualify for them. However, a person low in knowledge and deeds like me who is not at all qualified to undertake a project of this eminence and who knows his limitations so well could not have even aspired for it.

But one day, as luck had it, I came across a collection of forty Ahadith (popularly known as *Arba'een* in Islamic literature) which was an Urdu translation of an *Arba'een* compiled by Hazrat Shah Waliyullah Dehlawi. In fact, any collection of the sayings of the Prophet was indeed worth all respect and love. But, in addition, this collection was prepared by an Islamic scholar of Shah Waliyullah's eminence whose scholarship and piety are so very well known and established. I felt so grateful to Allah that He made it easy for me this way to share the blessings of working on an *Arba'een*. I felt I could contribute to this work in some way. The language of the translation needed to be updated as the Urdu language had changed in time, and explanatory notes could be added at appropriate places. And with this little effort I could participate in a work fetching so rich rewards. Who knows, I thought, that Allah the Bountiful would grant forgiveness and blessings to me for this work and include me in His fold of mercy with Hazrat Shah Waliyullah, the author of the original *Arba'een*.

Prophet Muhammad, May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, was gifted with an extraordinary excellence in the appreciation and usage of language, in addition to his spiritual and moral eminence. His sayings display a remarkably high standard in linguistic exquisiteness and is outshone only by the verses of the Holy Qur`an in this respect.

and is outshone only by the verses of the Holy Qur`an in this respect. This quality is clearly manifest in the forty Ahadith compiled in this book: sayings are short but every word speaks volumes. These sayings deserve to occupy the place of proverbs and in fact, many have already attained this position of popularity and pride.

Hazrat Shah Waliyullah Dehlawi died in 1176 Hijri (1762 CE). He must have prepared this collection at least sometime before his death. After about one hundred years in 1254 Hijri (1838 CE) Sayyid Abdullah, a spiritual disciple (*khalifa*) of Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed, published it from Matba' Ahmadi, KolKota. Then after four years Muhammad Mustafa Khan bin Muhammad Roshan Khan, a reputed publisher of Lucknow, published another translation of it with explanatory notes from his press Matba' Mustafai, Lucknow (Mahmood Nagar) in Jamadiul Ukhra 1258 Hijri (1842 CE). And recently Maulana Abdul Haleem Chishti has brought out this second translation with the text of Ahadith and notes in *Al-Raheem*, a monthly published from Hyderabad, Pakistan. I have adopted the text fully from Maulana Chishti's article and edited the language of the notes only to the extent that were necessary to suit the changes occurring in the Urdu language in the past one hundred and twenty-five years.

I express gratitude to Maulana Abdul Haleem Chishti, author of the article and editor of the monthly *Al-Raheem*. May Allah shower His blessings on Hazrat Shah Waliyullah and the two translators and forgive my transgressions, known and hidden!

Abdul Majid Daryabadi
Daryabad, Barah Banki
1967 (1387 H)

In the name of Allah, Most Benevolent, Most Merciful

PREFACE

After duly praising Allah and invoking His blessings and peace on Prophet Muhammad, the author (Shah Waliyullah Dehlawi) submits that this book contains forty such sayings of the Prophet that are authentic. These are brief in words but rich in meaning[1] so that the seekers of virtue read it with the hope that they may be included among the *ulema* (the Islamic scholars)[2] on the basis of the following saying of the Prophet: "He who memorizes for my followers forty Ahadith relating to the religion, will be raised as *faqeeh* (the Islamic jurist) on the Day of Judgement and I will be a witness and intercessor for him."[3]

Now (Shah) Waliyullah (may Allah forgive his sins) says that the following Ahadith were related to him by Abu Tahir Madani, who related them on the authority of his

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[1] A fundamental characteristic of eloquence in the Arabic language is that a saying should be brief but rich in meaning. This quality is found in the perfect form in the Ahadith compiled in this book.

[2] In front of Allah, at the time of Resurrection.

[3] How heartening this saying of the Prophet is! What a great reward for a meager service! The Prophet will stand a witness for a Muslim and intercede for him if he simply collects forty Ahadith and relates them to others.

A *faqeeh* is he whose understanding of the religion of Islam is authentic.

father Sheikh Ibrahim Kurdi, who[4] related them on the authority of Zainul Abedeen, who related them on the authority of his father Abdul Qadir, who related them on the authority of his grandfather Yahya, who related them on the authority of his grandfather Muhibb, who related them on the authority of his father's uncle Abi Aiman, who related them on the authority of Shahab Ahmad, who related them on the authority of his father Raziuddeen, , who related them on the authority of Abul Qasim, who related them on the authority of Sayyid Abu Muhammad, who related them on the authority of his father Abul Hasan, who related them on the authority of Abu Talib, who related them on the authority of Abu Ali, who related them on the authority of his father Muhammad Zahid, who related them on the authority of his father Abu Ali, who related them on the authority of Abul Qasim, who related them on the authority of his father Abu Muhammad, who related them on the authority of his father Husain, who related them on the authority of Jafar, who related them on the authority of his father Abdullah, who related them on the authority of his father Zainul 'Abedeen, who related them on the authority of his father Imam Husain, who related them on the authority of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib—may Allah's blessings descend on them all. He[5] narrated that the

[4] Such a Hadith is called *Riwayate Musalsal* (Continuous Narration). The Islamic scholars attained a perfection in this branch of study which was not witnessed before them nor ever after. The work of world-known scholars in other disciplines are no match in any way to that of the Muslim Tradionalists (*Muhadditheen*).

[5] The last narrator Ameerul Mo'mineen 'Ali ibn Talib.

Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be upon him, said that.....

1. لَيْسَ الْخَبَرُ كَالْمُعَايَنَة

What is heard cannot be equal to what is seen.[6]

2. وَبِهِ الْحَرْبُ خُدْعَة

(And on the same authority)[7] War is another name of deception.[8]

3. وَبِهِ الْمُسْلِمُ مِرْآةُ الْمُسْلِم

A Muslim is a mirror for another Muslim.[9]

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[6] This is to emphasize that a piece of news acquired by hearing can never be as reliable as the one that is ascertained by personally having seen the event in question. If this distinction is kept in mind, chances of misunderstanding become minimum.

[7] *bihi*, which is used in the Arabic text, means, "on the same authority as quoted above." The Traditionalists (*Muhaddhitheen)* repeat it in the beginning of every new Hadith. This phrase, therefore, will be retained in the Arabic text. We will, however, not translate it into English so as to maintain directness and simplicity.

[8] It means that a war cannot decisively prove what is right and what is wrong. As the objective in the wars generally fought in the world remains victory, each party unscrupulously resorts to deceptive tactics, thus ignoring all moral laws. Such is the case with the wars fought for worldly gains. Islamic Jihad, on the other hand, does not submit to immoral values. It is governed by truth, reliability, and sincerity from beginning to end.

[9] A Muslim should be sincere to another Muslim (not having any ills in his heart against him) and should show him his shortcomings truthfully and sincerely.

4. وَبِهِ الْمُسْتَشَارُ مُؤتَمَنٌ

The person who is consulted for advice must prove trustworthy.[10]

5. وَبِهِ الدَّالُّ عَلَى الخَيرُ كَفَاعِلِه

The person who guides someone to a virtue is like the one who performs it.[11]

6. وَبِهِ اِستَعِينُوا عَلَى الحَوَائِج بِالكِتمَان

Seek help in need stealthily.[12]

7. وَبِهِ اِتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِ تَمرَةٍ

Save yourself from the Hellfire, even if half of a date helps you in it.[13]

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[10] If a person asks for advice, the person consulted must give him sincere advice. He also should not disclose his secrets to others.

[11] The person who guides someone to a virtuous deed will also get rewards equal to the rewards of the person who actually performs it. Islam encourages individuals to be virtuous, but it also attaches great importance to encouraging others in general to adopt the path of virtue and piety.

[12] If in need, one should seek help from others as stealthily as possible, without unnecessarily talking about it in public. If he does not observe this caution, the opponents will have an opportunity to defame him.

[13] "Half of a date" is to suggest meagerness. It implies that one should not miss doing a virtuous deed, even if it looks insignificant to him.

8. وَبِهِ الدُّنْيَاسِجْنُ الْمُومِنِ وَ جَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

The world is a prison for believers and a paradise for disbelievers.[14]

9. وَبِهِ الْحَيَاءُ خَيرٌ كُلُّه

Modesty is out and out a virtue.[15]

10. وَبِهِ عِدَةُ الْمُوْمِنِ كَأَخْذِالْكَفِّ

A promise made by a believer orally is as strong (and binding on him) as a promise that he makes by striking his hand (on the hand of another person).[16]

11. وَبِهِ لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُوْمِنٍ اَنْ يَّهجُرَ أَخَاه فَوقَ ثَلٰثَةِ أَيَّامٍ

It is not allowed for a believer to sever relationship with his (Muslim) brother for more than three days.[17]

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[14] The limitations of this world in fact make it a prison for believers, as they will be blessed with the limitless divine favors in the Hereafter. The disbelievers, on the other hand, find this world a paradise, but they actually have a limited opportunity of enjoying themselves in this world. This Hadith may have another meaning as well: a believer has to live in this world a life of restrictions enjoined upon him by his faith, whereas a disbeliever feels free to do whatever he likes, without any moral obligations binding upon him.

[15] This prophetic saying emphasizes that Modesty (*haya*) is a virtue in its entirety.

[16] A believer is supposed to take his oral promise as seriously as he takes the promise that he makes by formally striking his hand with that of the other person. He should keep his word in all circumstances.

[17] It is natural that people develop grievances against one another in this world. This Hadith teaches us that in such a situation a Muslim

12. وَبِهِ لَيْسَ مِنَّامَنْ غَشَّنَا

He is not one of us who violates trust (commits *kheyanat*).[18]

13. وَبِهِ مَاقَلَّ وكَفٰى خَيْرٌمِمَّاكَثُرَ و اَلْهٰى

A thing which is a little but sufficient is better than a thing which is much but leads (one) to forgetfulness.[19]

14. وَبِهِ اَلرَّاجِعُ فِى هِبَتِهِ كَالرَّاجِعِ فِى قَيْئِهِ

The person who takes back a thing that he gave away to someone is like the one who licks his own vomit.[20]

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may discontinue talking, even greeting another Muslim who might have hurt him, but such strained relationship should not be allowed to continue for long. It should end in three days to the maximum. This Hadith does allow a Muslim a right to express his grievance against another Muslim in a natural way if there is such a situation, but it also teaches him to control his emotion and try to normalize his relationship with another Muslim within three days.

[18] This prophetic saying emphasizes the importance of collective well-being of the Muslim community by proclaiming that he who cheats, deceives, or commits mistrust does not deserve to be counted as a member of the Muslim community.

[19] A thing small in number or quantity which brings satisfaction and contentment to its owner is surely much better than a thing in a large number or quantity which increases his greed and ultimately creates in his heart an ever-lasting discontentment. A drink that quenches thirst is what a person needs, not a drink that makes him thirstier.

[20] This is to show a natural repulsion that a person should feel in taking back a thing that he had given away to someone.

15. وَبِهِ الْبَلَاءُ مُوَكَّلٌ بِالْمَنْطِقِ

Trouble is a natural outcome of talking (irresponsibly).[21]

16. وَبِهِ النَّاسُ كَاسْنَانِ الْمُشْطِ

Human beings are like the teeth of a comb.[22]

17. وَبِهِ الْغِنَى غِنَى النَّفْسِ

Richness is in fact a condition of heart.[23]

18. وَبِهِ السَّعِيدُ مَنْ وُعِظَ بِغَيْرِهِ

Fortunate is he who takes lessons from the affairs of others.[24]

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[21] A person gets into trouble mainly by talking too much, or telling lies, or talking about things that do not concern him. If a person learns to control his tongue, he can save himself from so many troubles. Ahadith mentioning the harms of talking irresponsibly are many. Imam Ghazali and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi have discussed this issue in detail in their writings.

[22] As a comb becomes useless if some of its teeth are broken, a society also becomes inefficient and tainted if even a few of its members become corrupt.

[23] The famous saying of the Persian poet Sa'di that "richness is in heart, not in wealth" emphasizes the same truth of human experience.

[24] That person is unfortunate from whose faults others take a lesson; fortunate is he who learns from the faults of others and improves himself.

19. وَبِهِ إِنَّ مِنَ الشِّعْرِ لَحِكْمَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ لَسِحْرًا

Some verses are full of wisdom and some orations have magical effect.[25]

20. وَبِهِ عَفْوُ الْمُلُوكِ إِبْقَاءٌ لِلْمُلْكِ

The survival of a country depends upon the rulers' (policy of) forgiveness.[26]

21. وَبِهِ الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّهُ

A person will be with him whom he loves.[27]

22. وَبِهِ مَاهَلَكَ اِمْرَءٌ عَرَفَ قَدْرَهُ

He who has cognizance of himself is protected from destruction.[28]

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[25] Indeed the words of good poets contain gems of wisdom, and the words of good orators have such magical power that can change the hearts of the audience.

[26] The survival and stability of a country depend very much on the rulers' patience, tolerance, and policy of forgiveness. If a ruler deals harshly with his subjects for minor things, they will be put into hardships, which may lead to their destruction or force them to rise to mutiny.

[27] What an easy formula provided here to the Muslims! If a Muslim holds the virtuous persons dear and associates himself with them, he will enjoy the blessings of their companionship. And truly the love for the Prophet of Allah, blessings and peace be on him, is the best of this kind of love.

[28] It is a great achievement for a person to know himself well, for if he recognizes his weaknesses, he will not fall a victim to self-deception. In addition, knowledge of his own self will lead him to the knowledge of

23. وَبِهِ اَلْوَلَدُ لِلْفِرَاشِ و لِلْعَاهِرِ الْحَجَرُ

A son is for the woman and for the sinner (the man who commits adultery) is the stone.[29]

24. وَبِهِ اَلْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى

The upper hand is better than the lower hand.[30]

25. وَبِهِ لَا يَشْكُرُ اللهَ مَنْ لَا يَشْكُرُ النَّاسَ

He who does not thank human beings will not be thankful to Allah.[31]

26. وَبِهِ حُبُّكَ الشَّيْءَ يُعْمِي وَيُصِمُّ

Love of a thing makes a person blind and deaf.[32]

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[28] It is a great achievement for a person to know himself well, for if he recognizes his weaknesses, he will not fall a victim to self-deception. In addition, knowledge of his own self will lead him to the knowledge of the Lord, the Ultimate Truth in human life. That is why it is said that he who knows his own self will come to know God.

[29] If a boy is born from an illicit relationship, the mother will be his custodian, and the father (who committed the sin of adultery) will have no claim on him.

[30] It implies that the person who gives charity in any form is better than the one who receives it. This saying, however, does not apply to the situation in which a common Muslim offers a gift to a pious Muslim out of love and reverence.

[31] In fact, Allah alone deserves our thanks for all favors, but a human being who helps in need should also be thanked. If this instruction is put into practice, human relationships will become pleasant for all.

27. وَبِهِ جُبِلَتِ الْقُلُوبُ عَلٰى حُبِّ مَنْ اَحْسَنَ اِلَيْهَا وَبُغْضِ مَنْ اَساۤءَ اِلَيْهَا

Hearts are made in such a way that they develop love for those who benefit, and hatred for those who harm.[33]

28. وَبِهِ التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَّاذَنْبَ لَه.

He who repents after committing a sin is like the one who has not committed it.[34]

29. وَبِهِ الشَّاهِدُ يَرٰى مَالَا يَرَاهُ الْغَائِبُ.

A person present on the scene witnesses a thing that a person absent cannot.[35]

30. وَبِهِ اِذَاجَاۤءَ كَرِيْمُ قَوْمٍ فَاَكْرِمُوْهُ.

When a chief of a tribe comes to you, treat him with respect.[36]

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[33] It is in the nature of mankind to feel attraction for those who help and benefit, and repulsion for those who hurt and harm. This Hadith emphasizes a psychological truth about human nature. Such keen and beneficial observations are frequent in Ahadith.

[34] This saying emphasizes the virtue of repentance. If a person gives up a sinful act, repents sincerely, and does the needful to recompense as much as is possible for him, he is forgiven by Allah and his status in the sight of Allah is not adversely affected.

[35] There is a great difference between the person who is present on the scene of an event and the person who is absent in ascertaining facts about it. The one who is present sees it directly whereas the other who is absent can know about it only through someone else.

30. وَبِهِ إِذَاجَآءَ كَرِيْمُ قَوْمٍ فَأَكْرِمُوْهُ

When a chief of a tribe comes to you, treat him with respect.[36]

31. وَبِهِ اَلْيَمِيْنُ الْفَاجِرَةُ تَدَعُ الدِّيَارَ الْبَلَاقِعَ

False oaths bring destruction to countries (nations).[37]

32. وَبِهِ مَنْ قُتِلَ دُوْنَ مَالِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيْدٌ

He who is killed in protecting his wealth is also a martyr.[38]

33. وَبِهِ اَلْاَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّةِ

Deeds depend on intention.[39]

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[36] A Muslim has to respect another Muslim for his faith. But if a leader of non-Muslims comes to pay a visit, he will also be treated respectfully on the basis of his high position among his people. This prophetic saying teaches us to be mindful of human psychology and sentiments in dealing with people in general.

[37] If taking a false oath becomes a norm in a nation, false witnesses appear in legal cases, and the courts start deciding about disputes on the basis of false witnesses, the character of that nation will degenerate and its moral foundation will crumble down. As a result, that nation will soon meet downfall and destruction.

[38] A person who owns a property or wealth has a right to protect it in the same way as he has a right to protect his motherland. The Islamic laws show full consideration to the natural attachment of human beings to their property. Therefore, if a Muslim loses his life in protecting his wealth, he will also be granted a level of martyrdom.

[39] A person sees only the appearance of others' deeds. The intention, which is the spirit behind the deeds, is always hidden from sight. But Allah knows the real intention of a person behind a deed (and will

34. وَبِهِ سَيِّدُ القومِ خَادِمُهُم

The leader of a people is (in fact) their servant.[40]

35. وَبِهِ خَيرُ الأمُورِ اَوسَطُهَا

The best deeds are those in which moderation is maintained.[41]

36. وَبِهِ اللّهُمَّ بَارِكْ فِى اُمتِى فِى بُكُوُ رِهَايَوُم الخَمِيُس

Lord! Bless my followers with favors in their journey on Thursday morning.[42]

37. وَبِهِ كَادَ الفَقرُاَن يَّكُفراً

Poverty may push a person close to infidelity (*kufr*).[43]

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[40] Here is a clear Islamic definition of the status of a leader. He has to serve his people in which alone lies his superiority.

[41] A Muslim is instructed to observe moderation in performing good deeds; he should not try to overdo, nor should he be content with too little.

[42] Friday is a day of blessings in Islam, but here the Prophet has made a special prayer for Thursday to be a day of blessings for his followers.

[43] Contentment, denial of greed, and humility are qualities for which great rewards are promised in Islam. But it does not mean that Islam disapproves of affluence and riches. Poverty sometimes may become unbearable for a Muslim due to which he may turn a renegade. Among the leaders of the Companions of the Prophet were both indigent ones like Abu Dhar and Abu Huraira, as well as the affluent ones like 'Usman bin 'Affan, 'Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf, Talha, and Zubair (May Allah be pleased with them).

38. وَبِهِ السَّفَرُ قِطْعَةٌ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ

Journey is a kind of suffering.[44]

39. وَبِهِ الْمَجَالِسُ بِالْأَمَانَةِ

Trust *(Amanat)* grants integrity to gatherings.[45]

40. وَبِهِ خَيْرُ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى

The best provision is fear of Allah (*taqwa*).[46]

(*wa sallallahu ta'ala 'ala khaire khalqihi Muhammad wa 'aalihi wa ashaabihi ajma'een)*

(May Allah's blessings descend on the best of creations, Muhammad, and on his Progeny and Companions.)

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'Usman bin 'Affan, 'Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf, Talha, and Zubair (May Allah be pleased with them).

[44] Undoubtedly journey was a suffering in the days of the Prophet. It is still so in spite of the facilities made available by modern resources. At least the daily routine of a person is disturbed in the journey.

[45] This saying teaches us that a person should not divulge the secrets of others. He should keep up to himself the matters that he comes to know by sitting in social gatherings. This is the first step of social responsibility based on mutual trust.

[46] This Hadith about journey is a part of a verse in the Qur'an. Here the Prophet has generalized it by stating that it is such a virtue that can serve us best in all stages in the journey of life.